DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 147 921 95 EA 010 081

TITLE	Classroom Discipline. The Best of ERIC Number 33.
INSTITUTION	Oregon Univ., Eugene. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jan 78
CONTRACT	400-78-0007
NOTE	5p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403 (free)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Annotated Bibliographies; *Class Management; *Classroom Environment; Classroom Techniques; *Discipline; Discipline Policy; Discipline Problems; Elementary Secondary Education; Misbehavior; Principals; Punishment; *Students; Student School Relationship; Student Teacher Relationship

ABSTRACT

The 12 journal articles and documents annotated in this bibliography cover different aspects of classroom discipline and management. The sources cover topics such as the use of behavioral extinction and contingency management in classroom discipline, the student teacher relationship, discipline in big city schools, faculty training to improve student discipline, the principal's role in pupil control, and classroom discipline without punishment. All 12 articles and documents are indexed in the ERIC system. (DS)

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Number 33 January 1978

The Best of ERIC

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The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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Classroom Discipline

1. Abrell, Ronald L. "Classroom Discipline without Punishment." ***Clearing House***, 50, 4 (December 1976), pp. 171-73. EJ 157 885.

Discipline in the classroom is fundamental to learning, but coercion is inhumane and rarely works. It is the responsibility of the teacher to assist students in achieving ***self***-discipline, writes Abrell.

He includes in this article a list of personal and environmental factors that should be cultivated to minimize discipline problems. The method of correction he proposes places ultimate responsibility for behavior on the student: no detentions, isolation, suspensions, or other types of negative punishment are to be used. The first time a student misbehaves, the teacher corrects him or her in an unobtrusive way. If another incident occurs, the teacher reminds the student that his behavior is unsatisfactory and that the rules must be observed. Following subsequent acts of misconduct, the student meets with both the teacher and the principal.

Abrell suggests that if the student believes he cannot function productively under existing conditions, a change of teachers or school may be in order. If this change fails to work, the student is directed to leave school and to seek another institution that will meet his needs more satisfactorily.

Unlike many prevailing plans for dealing with misbehavior, this system is future-oriented, says Abrell. However, before implementation, school personnel should carefully examine the legal ramifications.

2. Doyle, Walter. "Helping Beginning Teachers Manage Classrooms." ***NASSP Bulletin***, 59, 395 (December 1975), pp. 38-41. EJ 135 566.

Many beginning teachers encounter difficulty managing their classes. To the extent these problems are not rectified during student teaching, supervisory personnel in the schools should offer first-year teachers the needed training, Doyle contends.

Doyle explains the work of Jacob S. Kounin, whose research has substantiated the connection between discipline and general classroom management skills. Kounin's findings indicate that what a teacher does before misbehavior takes place is crucial in determining overall disciplinary success and sustaining task involvement. In refining his concepts, Kounin was able to identify four dimensions of managerial skill: "withitness," which refers to the teacher's ability to communicate to students his or her awareness of what is happening in the classroom; "overlap," the teacher's ability to perform two or more activities at one time; "movement management," the teacher's skill in maintaining momentum; and "group focus," the teacher's competence in involving all class members in each classroom event.

Doyle believes that Kounin's framework can be helpful in identifying the source of classroom management problems and provides a practical illustration dealing with the concept of group focus.

3. Estadt, Gary J.; Willower, Donald J.; and **Caldwell, William E.** "School Principals' Role Administration Behavior and Teachers' Pupil Control Behavior: A Test of the Domino Theory." ***Contemporary Education***, 47, 4 (Summer 1976), pp. 207-212. EJ 152 436.

The domino theory of administration holds that behavior at one level of the hierarchy determines behavior at the next lower level, and so on, through the organization. In testing this theory, Estadt and his colleagues sought to determine whether the style used by secondary school principals in administering rules governing teachers affects the manner in which those teachers control the behavior of their students.

Using a rule administration scale developed by Caldwell and some of his associates, teachers were asked to characterize their principals. The principals were then divided into three categories on the basis of leadership style: representative, punishment-centered, and mock. Examples of items from the respective categories are "The principal would assume you have a good reason if you did not attend a scheduled teachers' meeting," "If you left school early, the principal has a method of checking and would penalize you," and "The principal would disregard your absence at a scheduled teachers' meeting." Students at the same schools ranked their teachers on a humanistic-custodial continuum.

The authors hypothesized that in schools headed by principals in the "representative" leadership category teachers would tend to be humanistic, whereas in those headed by "punishment-centered" principals the teachers would be more custodial. Neither of these hypotheses was supported by the data.

"The major result of the present investigation is its failure

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to find any support for the domino theory," write the authors. "At least for the present sample, the secondary school principal's pattern of rule administration with regard to teachers has no relationship to the teacher's pupil control behavior." The authors note, however, that in interpreting these results it is important to recognize that while the instruments used purport to examine behavior, both do so by tapping perceptions of behavior.

4. George, Paul S. "Changing Classroom Behavior: The School Principal and Contingency Management." ***NASSP Bulletin***, 56, 368 (December 1972), pp. 31-36. EJ 065 976.

5. Drabman, Ronald S., Jarvie, Gregory J., and **Archbold, James.** "The Use and Misuse of Extinction in Classroom Behavioral Programs." ***Psychology in the Schools***, 13, 4 (October 1976), pp. 470-75. EJ 146 258.

In their efforts to improve both discipline and the quality of education, behavioral scientists have suggested a variety of procedures designed to reduce unwanted behaviors. Contingency management involves rewarding good behavior and ignoring inappropriate behavior. George outlines how this technique works and how it can be used by the school principal. Drabman and colleagues look at some of the pitfalls and how to avoid them.

When educational researchers study the tasks performed by school administrators, they find that principals spend a disproportionate amount of their time trying to change the behavior of teachers and students. Most conventional methods are negative. George believes contingency management provides a positive alternative. Based on the law of association and the fact that behavior seems to be more affected by what follows it than by what precedes it, the technique requires four essential steps. First, select the behavior to be changed. For a teacher the principal might select the production of long-range lesson plans. For a student the target behavior might be the extinction of fighting with other pupils. Second, study the behavior and record the number of times it occurs. Third, choose an appropriate reward and use it immediately following the presence of the desired behavior or the absence of the undesirable behavior. Fourth, look at how often the behavior now occurs to see if the strategy is working.

George advocates contingency management as an approach to solving day-to-day problems. He also believes its use by the principal can improve the attitudes of students toward school. "The principal in the American school is something of a symbol of the entire educational system," he writes. Positive or negative associations transfer from him to the school experience as a whole.

The article by Drabman and his associates focuses on one aspect of contingency management, the use of extinction, or contingent ignoring, in the classroom. They believe the technique can be effective if properly implemented, but caution it must be taken step by step.

"Because of the ease of initiating the extinction procedure, it is tempting to skip the baseline phase," but it is essential that the teacher first determine who presently is reinforcing the negative behavior, write the authors. If the other students, not the teacher, are the source of reinforcement, the teacher might choose instead to reward them for ignoring it. Once the process has begun, the teacher must be committed to ignoring the behavior each time it occurs and must be prepared to see a temporary increase or possibly the substitution of another, inappropriate form of behavior. For this reason, it is critical that the teacher make acceptable alternatives available to the child. For example, if the target behavior involves talking in class, the teacher should instruct the child that the correct way to communicate is by raising one's hand, and then reinforce the child with immediate attention when he or she remembers to do this.

6. Grantham, Marvin L., and **Harris, Clifton S., Jr.** "A Faculty Trains Itself to Improve Student Discipline." ***Phi Delta Kappan***, 57, 10 (June 1976), pp. 661-64. EJ 139 344.

It is easy for school personnel to blame lack of discipline on the community, but deploring the present situation and waiting for society to change is a nonsolution, in the opinion of these authors. Hence, the faculty of the Herbert Marcus Elementary School of Dallas, Texas, asked themselves, "Are we part of the problem?" and began a year-long staff development effort to provide the tools for better classroom management.

The heart of the plan was a series of development sessions led by the principal and outside professionals. In these sessions, staff explored alternative teaching and disciplinary techniques. Three students in each class were identified to receive individualized attention based on the new things the teachers were learning. Three additional students in each class were selected to act as controls. At the beginning and end of the year, observations were made of each teacher in the classroom, and achievement tests were administered to both sets of students. The results, report the authors, were gratifying. Not only had the teachers become better managers, but there had been a marked decrease in discipline problems, as well as a modest increase in pupil achievement.

The Marcus School staff thinks that the best approach to discipline is a preventive one—the provision of a variety of educational and environmental alternatives that will interest, chal-

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lenge, and motivate the pupil. "Like it or not," conclude the authors, "the first place to cope with disciplinary problems is in the classroom. The teacher must make the primary adjustments—even while the pupil is learning to assume responsibility for his actions."

7. Harris, Ian M. "Boundaries, Set Theory, and Structure in the Classroom." ***Education***, 93, 3 (February-March 1973), pp. 285-91. EJ 072 545.

In contemporary educational circles there has been much talk of "the open classroom." Harris points out that no classrooms are open in the sense that they have no restrictions. Every aggregation of people will have some structure, even if it consists only of the individuals' likes and dislikes. The important thing is that these behaviors be made explicit from the beginning so that individuals within the group may know what is expected of them.

Harris advocates a system in which students participate in the formation of rules; in this article he outlines a three-step process for identifying areas of concern, establishing limits, and negotiating the actual rules. Once the rules have been set, they should be posted in some prominent place for all to see. With such a public reminder, discipline problems should be negligible, he says. "If they should occur, the rules are clearly out in the open, and the students prove that they are excellent enforcers of rules they accept and understand."

Harris' article focuses on the setting of boundaries within classrooms, but he believes the same approach may be used in any reasonably small educational setting. The school where he teaches uses the process to structure behavior for the whole school. Even in large schools, he concludes, the rules can be laid out clearly so that all know what is expected.

8. Leviton, Harvey S. "The Individualization of Discipline for Behavior Disordered Pupils." ***Psychology in the Schools***, 13, 4 (October 1976), pp. 445-48. EJ 146 252.

As Leviton points out, there is a growing literature on the individualization of instruction. But little, if anything, has been written about using different methods of discipline for different students. In this paper, he presents a rationale for individualized discipline and proposes a tentative strategy for matching the five types of behavior-disordered children identified by H. C. Quay with twenty potential forms of discipline.

For example, Quay has labelled one category of children "anxious withdrawn." He describes them as fearful, underbehaving, rather than misbehaving. For these children, Leviton suggests student/teacher conferences and the rewarding of good behavior. Inappropriate forms of discipline might include dismissal from class and corporal punishment. "The perceptive teacher may step down hard on an aggressive child when he interrupts, while identical behavior from a timid child would be reinforced or encouraged," he says.

Leviton includes a table summarizing appropriate teacher behavior for each of the five types of children, but writes it is meant not as a "cookbook" but "as an attempt to systematize the differences in children's behavior and the appropriate techniques for coping with it."

9. National Education Association. ***Discipline and Learning: An Inquiry into Student-Teacher Relationships.*** Washington, D.C.: 1975. 129 pages. ED 103 988.

Although the subtitle of this book is "An Inquiry into Student-Teacher Relationships," its scope is much broader. A compilation of twenty-one articles written by teachers, administrators, and researchers, the authors look at discipline from both a historical and contemporary perspective. "Learning can only take place in an environment that reflects the care of the teacher for all the students—and that care means not only the concern for their personal welfare, but also the establishment and maintenance of good discipline."

Another article in this section, written by the late Edward T. Ladd, explores the increase in discipline-related court cases and what can be done about it. Ladd attributes the problem to the fact that for two centuries our schools have been run on the authoritarian principles of Puritan justice, while our laws are based on a system in which the rights of individuals are central. "The way out of the dilemma is fairly clear, but far from easy," he writes. "Simply replacing the Puritan system with the Madisonian system will not do, of course," but we can guarantee more rights to students while reserving others for school officials.

The book also presents discussions of specific disciplinary approaches, including an article from the ***American School Board Journal*** on corporal punishment. Citing the results of a National Education Association task force, the authors write, "Forget the bleeding hearts who whine that it's a humiliating experience. Corporal punishment simply doesn't work."

10. National School Boards Association. ***Report: Discipline in Our Big City Schools***. Washington, D.C.: Ad hoc Committee on Discipline, Council of Big City Boards of Education, 1977. 45 pages. ED number not yet assigned.

Concerned about the growing problem of school discipline, the National School Boards Association's Council of Big City Boards of Education appointed an ad hoc committee to take a look at some of the nation's largest school districts. The com-

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mittee contacted more than 100 districts and in this report outlines its findings and recommendations.

As the committee undoubtedly had anticipated, the large majority of schools contacted reported that incidents of disruptive behavior are increasing in frequency. Disruptive behavior seems most prevalent among students in junior high or in their early high school years. At the elementary level, the problem appears to be growing but has not yet reached the "serious" stage. Approximately 75 percent of the districts surveyed report nonattendance (tardiness/truancy/cutting class) as the most frequent single cause of disciplinary action. Other oft-cited problems are violations of school regulations, assaults, verbal abuse of teachers, theft, vandalism, and class disruption.

Data submitted to the committee did not indicate whether disruptive behavior occurs more frequently among minority students. It is apparently true that some discipline problems are acute in large, urban areas, concludes the committee, but, "there is no evidence to suggest that these problems are related to the students' ethnic or racial background."

The report includes examples of how various districts handle discipline and concludes with a six-point plan developed by the committee for use by districts experiencing discipline problems.

11. Olivero, James L. ***Discipline . . . No. 1 Problem in the Schools? 40 Positive, Preventative Prescriptions for Those Who Care. . . .*** Operations Notebook 17. Burlingame, California: Association of California School Administrators, 1977. 61 pages. ED number not yet assigned.

Olivero begins this report by citing some pretty grim statistics about the increasing incidence of violence and other serious discipline problems in the schools. However, his central premise is a positive one. He firmly believes these problems can be overcome if teachers, students, and parents work together, and he includes numerous, concrete examples of how this can be done.

The first part of the report is devoted to a discussion of causes, at school and at home. "Having been in numerous schools the past decade," he says, "I've been amazed at the number of parents who have indicated they teach their children to fight."

In the remainder of the report he outlines in detail some forty innovative ideas that have been tried by various schools across the country. Involving students, faculty, and parents, these ideas include a rumor committee initiated by students at a Seattle junior high to avert misunderstandings between students, personalized approaches to counselling, ways to alleviate stress among teachers, and the rescheduling of field trips so parents can participate.

"Neither parents nor staff can attack the problem of discipline independently and be effective," says Olivero. "Both parties must team ***with*** students to establish and maintain a positive learning climate."

12. Stoops, Emery, and **King-Stoops, Joyce.** ***Discipline or Disaster?*** Fastback Series, No. 8. Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1975. 38 pages. ED 112 484.

One of a series of publications put out by the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, this little book presents a clear and concise introduction to the subject of school discipline. The authors begin with a general discussion of the concept of discipline and follow it with a section on discipline policies. "To avoid anarchy and disaster in a school situation, there must be positive regulations and standards for student behavior," write the authors. "These policies should be expressed in writing for the district, the building, and the classroom."

The last two sections of the book deal with classroom discipline and how to set classroom standards. The authors describe how to handle specific types of behavior problems and list tips on classroom control. For example, be in the room ahead of the students and start class promptly. Learn and use students' names as soon as possible. Be prepared. Be consistent. When challenged by a student, do not take it personally. Confer often with parents. Employ the three F's: Be friendly, fair, and firm.

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